Orissa's Textile Policy

Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor: PYARELAL

VOL. XI, No. 7 AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 1947 TWO ANNAS

GANDHIJI'S WALKING TOUR DIARY

17-2-'47

Gandhiji drew attention to two things that had been brought to his notice. The first was that a complaint in [illegible] which he was unfortunately an instrument had been found on enquiry by the officers to be without foundation. The articles which were reported to have been looted were mostly found in the very place from where they were said to have been looted. This was a serious matter. It was the second case that had come under his notice. Yesterday some Muslim friends had come to him and admitted that the Muslims had undoubtedly gone mad in October last but though they had not been so bad as the Hindus had been in Bihar, the Hindus were making up for it by putting the Muslims to inconvenience by lodging false complaints against some of them. They said that false complaints were far larger in number than true ones. That was not the way to bring the two together. He said that all those who lodged false complaints should be prosecuted and severely punished on conviction. If he was the Superintendent of Police or a Minister, he would certainly institute proceedings and bring the purjurers to justice. As for himself as a citizen desirous of serving his country he would only be able to do something if the names and addresses of perjured complainants were given to him. So far he had received no such names. The only case that was sent to him could not be supported when the complainant was requested to support his complaint. Generally he would say that the Hindus who lodged false complaints injured themselves, their co-religionists and the whole country.

The other thing he wished to draw attention to was a letter he had received from a responsible person who was doing the work of bringing about peace between the two that a Hindu lad was molested by some Muslims and that the latter had threatened the Hindus that they were to expect more drastic measures than last October's after he had left Noakhali or, which was the same thing as, after his death. He would like to think that this statement was untrue. But he feared it was not. But he did hope that the poison was restricted to a few ill-mannered persons. Whether however it was restricted to a few or whether it was a widespread trait, he ventured to think it was wholly against Islam. This, he said, with apologies to Fazlul Haque Saheb but no less firmly on that account. It would be an evil day for Islam or any religion when it was impatient of outside criticism. He did not believe himself to be an outsider. He respected Islam as he respected every other religion as his own and therefore he claimed to be a sympathetic and friendly critic. It was up to every good Muslim to take up a firm and unequivocal stand against what he believed to be vicious propaganda.

18-2-'47

As usual Gandhiji dealt with three questions that lay before him.

Q. Do you support evacuation of the Hindus from the affected areas if the League Government or the majority community agrees to give us due compensation ?

A. He had supported the proposition from the non-violent standpoint. It was applicable to all provinces whether the majority was Hindu or Muslim. What could the Government do if the majority had become so hostile that they would not tolerate the presence of the minority community ? In his opinion it would be improper for them to force the majority into submission, nor could they undertake to protect the minority at the point of the bayonet. Suppose for instance that the majority would not tolerate *Ramadhun* or the clapping, would not listen to the fact that Rama was not a person but the name was synonymous with God and that the Hindus believed in clapping, suppose further that the Muslims would not tolerate that, he had then no hesitation in saying that the minority should evacuate if adequate compensation was paid.

Q. Workers who came three or four months ago have had to undergo a great deal of mental and physical hardship. Then they often went without the guidance of top-ranking leaders. Now that transport conditions are easier, workers find themselves pulled in different directions by those who want to guide them. How can they avoid divided counsels and work efficiently at their appointed task ?

A. As to the second question he said that those who felt fagged had a perfect right to rest. As to the distraction caused by opposing advice by different leaders, the workers would make their selection of their leaders and follow them. But that was also only advisable when the advice of the leader appealed to their heart and head. In the case of conflict between the two, they must boldly follow their own heart and head. Such was the dictate of all religions. If it was so in religious matters, it was more so in mundane matters, especially in Noakhali where after all the issue was so simple. Theirs was to bring the two together, never to set one against the other.

Q. Repatriated women depend very much upon the presence of women workers from outside to instil hope and courage amongst them. How long can this be encouraged? Should not all workers from outside be gradually withdrawn?

A. As to the third question, what was true of male workers was equally true of women workers. They were there to instil faith in God and courage in them, not to make them feel helpless without them i. e. the workers. They must make it clear to the women in the respective villages that the workers were in the villages only for the time being and that the village women had to learn to rely upon themselves. They had to learn the art of dying for their faith and honour.

19-2-'47

The first question Gandhiji had to answer during the course of his address to the prayer gathering was:

Q. What should a Hindu worker do when he is being deliberately misrepresented by interested parties in Noakhali?

A. The answer in terms of *ahimsa*, generally, would be that acts should be allowed to speak for themselves. Whilst this was good as a general proposition there were occasions when to speak and explain was a duty and not to speak would amount to a falsehood. Therefore wisdom dictated that there were some occasions when speech must accompany action. Of course there was an occasion when mere thought would take the place of speech and action. Such was the attribute of the Almighty and might be almost possible for one in a billion, but he knew no such instance.

He then proceeded to deal with the following questions:

Q. You have advised evacuation if the majority become irrevocably hostile. But you have also maintained that a truly non-violent man should never give up hope of converting his opponent by love. Under these circumstances, how can a non-violent man accept defeat and evacuate?

A. As to this question, it was perfectly correct that a non-violent man would not move out of his place. For such a one there would be no question of compensation. He would simply die at his post and prove that his presence was not a danger to the State or the community. He knew that the Hindus of Noakhali made no such pretension. They were simple folk who loved the world and wanted to live in the world in peace and safety. Such persons would consult their honour if the Government honourably offered them compensation in order to see the majority living in peace. If the mere presence of the Hindus irritated the Muslims who were the majority, he would consider it to be the duty of the Government to offer compensation as it would be of the Government in a Hindu majority province to offer compensation to the Muslims if their presence irritated the majority community.

Q. In case of evacuation, under advice from the Government, should the evacuees ask for compensation for—

(a) all their movable and immovable property,

(b) loss of business?

In other words, what would you consider to be adequate compensation?

A. Gandhiji said that the Government would be obliged to compensate for both immovables and movables when the latter could not or were not carried away with him by the evacuee. Loss of business was a ticklish question. He could not conceive the possibility of any Government shouldering the burden of such compensation. He would understand the proposition that asked for a reasonable sum for enabling the person concerned to start business in a new place.

Whilst he examined and admitted the possibility of evacuation, his experience of all India told him that the Hindus and the Muslims knew how to live at peace among themselves. He declined to believe that people had said goodbye to their senses so as to make it impossible to live at peace with each other as they had done for generations.

For, he believed with the late Poet Iqbal that the Hindus and the Muslims who had lived together long under the shadow of the mighty Himalayas and had drunk the waters of the Ganges and the Jamuna had a unique message for the world.

20-2-'47

Gandhiji dealt with four questions at his prayer meeting.

Q. If you think the Government may boycott, i. e. remove the minority community, if they give adequate compensation, may not people take time by the forelock and go?

A. As to this he said that those who felt that they would take time by the forelock, and if a Hindu corporation was formed to take the Hindus away, he had nothing in common with them. He could not be party to any such scheme. The burden lay entirely on the majority community and the Government. He merely meant that when they declared bankruptcy of wisdom, the minority should go if they were adequately compensated. The other way was the way of violence i. e. civil war not of non-violence.

Q. You have said caste should go. But then will Hinduism survive? Why do you thus mix up Hinduism with the progressive religions like Christianity or Islam?

A. He maintained that caste as it was understood must go if Hinduism was to survive. He did not believe that Christianity and Islam were progressive and Hinduism static i. e. retrogressive. As a matter of fact he noticed no definite progress in any religion. The world would not be the shambles it had become if the religions of the world were progressive. There was room for *varna*, as a duty. This was true of all religions whether the name used was other than *varna*. What was a Muslim Maulvi or a Christian priest but a Brahmin if he taught his flock its true duty not for money but because he possessed the gift of interpretation? And this was true of the other divisions.

Q. As you are an advocate of the abolition of caste, are we to take it that you favour inter-caste marriages? Many occupations are now the monopoly of specific castes. Should not this be abolished?

A. He was certainly in favour of inter-caste marriages. The question did not arise when all became casteless. When this happy event took place, monopoly of occupations would go.

Q. If there is only one God, should there not be only one religion?

A. This was a strange quession. Just as a tree had a million leaves similarly though God was one, there were as many religions as there were men and women though they were rooted in one God. They did not see this plain truth because they were followers of different prophets and claimed as many religions as there were prophets. As a matter of fact whilst he believed himself to be a Hindu, he knew that he did not worship God in the same manner as one or all of them.

21-2-'47

There was a large number of visitors from villages near Chandpur, it being the nearest to Kamalapur. Hence Gandhiji congratulated the audience on having come from the surrounding villages. He however sympathized with them for being exposed to the sun. He also hoped that they were not afraid of the Indian sun, perhaps the greatest gift from God. Happy was India which had clear blue sky for the largest part of the year.

He then referred to the fact that he had gone to Chandpur more than once whilst India's grand old son Shri Haradayal Nag was alive. He was then his guest. He knew, therefore, what importance Chandpur had. He was glad that Chandpur had played its part in looking after the refugees. But he deplored the disregard of the laws of sanitation and cleanliness. If they rigidly carried out these rules they would not have to live in constant dread of the plague and other diseases which were the brood of insanitation.

He then told them that they must not harbour ill-will against their Muslim neighbours. He appealed to both the parties to live at peace with one another. But he held that if the Hindus alone harboured no ill-will against the Muslims or vice versa, strife would abate. If however both harboured ill-will, one against the other, strifes were bound to be the result. There was a powerful *mantra* in the *Upanishads* that man became what he thought. How true it was found in every walk of life! Let them beware of harbouring an evil thought.

He then came to the two questions before him. The first was:

Q. You advocate inter-caste marriages. Do you also favour marriages between Indians professing different religions? Should they declare themselves as belonging to no denomination, or can they continue their old religious practices and yet intermarry? If so, what form should the marriage ceremony take? Is it to be a purely civil function or a religious function? Do you consider religion to be exclusively a personal matter?

A. Thogh he admitted that he had not always held the view, he had come to the conclusion long ago that an inter-religious marriage was a welcome event whenever it took place. His stipulation was that such connection was not a product of lust. In his opinion it was no marriage. It was illicit intercourse. Marriage in his estimation was a sacred institution. Hence there must be mutual friendship, either party having equal respect for the religion of the other. There was no question in this of conversion. Hence the marriage ceremony would be performed by the priests belonging to either faith. This happy event could take place when the communities shed mutual enmity and had regard for the religions of the world.

Q. Should religious instruction form part of the school curriculum as approved by the State? Do you favour separate schools for children belonging to different denominations for facility of religious instruction? Or, should religious instruction be left in the hands of private bodies? If so, do you think it is right for the State to subsidize such bodies?

A. As to this question he said that he did not believe in State religion even though the whole community had one religion. The State interference would probably always be unwelcome. Religion was purely a personal matter. There were in reality as many religions as minds. Each mind had a different conception of God from that of the other.

He was also opposed to State aid partly or wholly to religious bodies. For he knew that an institution or group, which did not manage to finance its own religious teaching, was a stranger to true religion. This did not mean that the State schools would not give ethical teaching. The fundamental ethics were common to all religions.

22-2-'47

At the outset Gandhiji said that he had received from a Muslim friend in Baluchistan a printed sheet containing what he thought were the sayings of the Prophet and the teachers. The whole selection was good but he was attracted by the following from prophet Mahomed's sayings:

WHAT THE ANGELS WILL ASK

When God made the earth it shook to and fro till He put mountains on it to keep it firm. Then the Angels asked, O God, is there anything in Thy creation stronger than these mountains? And God replied, iron is stronger than these mountains, for it breaks them.

And is there anything in Thy creation stronger than iron?

Yes, fire is stronger than iron, for it melts it.

Is there anything stronger than fire?

Yes, water, for it quenches fire.

Is there anything stronger than water?

Yes, wind, for it puts water in motion.

O our Sustainer, is there anything stronger than wind?

Yes, a good man giving alms. If he gives it with his right hand and conceals it from his left,

(Continued on p. 67)

HARIJAN

March 16 **1947**

ORISSA'S TEXTILE POLICY

There is a good deal of loose thinking in regard to the policies to be followed by the popular Governments to improve the condition of the people. The note we published under caption *Orissa's Suicide* has called forth an explanation from the Premier Mehtab which we gladly give below:

"With regard to the first paragraph of the note there are no two opinions on the subject and I entirely agree with you on all points there. So far as the second paragraph is concerned, I am really surprised how you could say that the 'Orissa Government is the first to take the bait of the provincial spindle quota scheme and had obtained an over-riding priority for the import of plant and machinery for the new company, 'Orissa Textile Mills Ltd.', etc. I wish you had cared to collect authentic information from official sources if not from your friends here in Orissa. I give you the following materials for your information. I know your comment is based upon some propaganda carried on beneath the surface about the starting of the textile industry in Orissa. I think the materials I supply will correct your misinformation.

"The Post War Planning Committee (Textiles) were appointed by the Government of India in *February, 1945* under the chairmanship of Mr. D. M. Khatau. This Committee submitted their report in *November, 1945*. In that report they divided the whole of India into several zones declaring only Bombay as a surplus area and the other zones as deficit. Of these zones, Orissa, including the States, is a deficit zone to which permission to instal 150,000 spindles in total was recommended. The Textile Commissioner reduced this quota from 150,000 to 119,000 and the Government of India asked the Provincial Government to send their recommendations allotting 'spindlage to different firms by the *15th of April, 1946*'. It may be noted here that the same instructions were sent to other provinces also. In Orissa, Congress assumed office on the *27th of April, 1946*. Here, the provincial Government could have informed the Government of India that in view of the change of the Government in the province, the spindlage allotted to the province might be cancelled. In that case the firms to whom the allotment had been made could have started their industries in the neighbouring States or the spindlage would have lapsed to Bengal according to the instructions of the Government of India. It was also likely that the Government of India might have thrust the spindlage on the province in spite of protests from the province as has happened in the case of Madras. Any way, the Provincial Government did not move the Government of India to cancel this spindlage allotted to Orissa in 1945. In the meantime, continued discussion went on in the Party and also with the other provinces about the textile policy the Provincial Governments should follow. The decision of the Orissa Congress Assembly Party is attached herewith for your information. But it may be noted that except Madras no other province, specially the province of Bombay, which is admittedly the only surplus zone with regard to production of textiles, did make any move in the matter.

"On the 4th of November, 1946, the Government of India again expressed their anxiety to give special consideration to the claims of the industrially backward provinces with regard to import of machinery. In that letter, however, the Government of India requested the Provincial Government to inform them at an early date as to the parties in the province who qualified for priority on the grounds explained by them in the letter under reference. Because of this policy of the Government of India, not only our textile mills but the other industries also are receiving special consideration in view of the fact that Orissa happens to be an industrially backward province.

"From the above materials, you will please find that though Orissa did not and could not take the lead in preventing textile mills to be set up in Orissa, she did not take the lead in setting them up here. I had correspondence with Shri Jajuji on the subject. In my humble opinion the policy with regard to the production of cloth cannot be determined on a provincial basis. Unless an all-India policy is fixed up, it is futile for a single province, specially for a province like Orissa which has to import the entire stuff from other provinces, to bring about a revolutionary change. I do not think the argument that 'whatever may happen in other provinces and the States, Orissa should have a policy of its own with regard to the textile production', can hold good.

"It would be really helpful to us who agree to the principle you have enunciated in the first paragraph of your comment if you can suggest to us in details how to solve the practical problems which we as Government have to face everyday, otherwise, uninformed criticism does not lead us anywhere."

The Orissa Assembly Congress Party's Statement of Policy referred to one is the following:

"The Party believed in the establishment of the self-sufficient rural economy based on the *charkha* and village industries in the place of the existing money economy based on competition and centralized large scale production. The Party fully realized that without a radical reconstruction of the socio-economic structure along the lines indicated by Gandhiji, world peace will ever remain a dream. It was at the same time alive to the fact that it required immense patience and perseverance to attain this objective and that it was not a matter of a few months or years. In the opinion of the Party it would take fifteen to twenty years to fully build up the new social structure, provided the State and the national organization fully co-operated

in whipping up popular enthusiasm in this stupendous work. Any attempt to bring about this change by Governmental action alone, whether of a positive or a negative character, was sure to prove abortive. The Committee considered the question of completely eliminating cloth produced in mills from the Province in this broad perspective. In this connection it also considered the question of the establishment of Textile Mills according to the quotas allotted to the Province. After a threadbare discussion in the Party, it was felt that during the transitional period till the Province was able to fully meet its cloth requirements by hand-spinning and hand-weaving, it would be more desirable to depend upon textile mills of the Province, started and run under the control of the Provincial Government than upon the powerful Mills of Bombay and Ahmedabad. The Party, however, made it clear that it would throw in its full weight in favour of the policy of prohibiting the starting of any new Textile Mills, provided the other Provinces or at least those administered by the Congress agreed to follow it, or even otherwise, provided the existing Textile Mills in the country and those that will be started now were fully nationalized and brought under the full control of the State."

With reference to these the following reply has been sent:

"I am thankful to you for the explanation offered in regard to the Textile Policy of the Province in your letter of the 22nd Feb. 1947. I am afraid you had taken my criticism as levelled against you and the Congress Government and so have taken pains to absolve yourself of the responsibility by referring to the date of your assuming office. You also presume that I had been carried away by propaganda material.

"Nothing was further from my thought than allocating responsibility to anyone. I had not even mentioned the Congress. I referred to the "Orissa Government" which will naturally mean the Government of the day when the action was taken.

"I had no contact with anyone carrying on any propaganda. I gathered my information from the authorized prospectus of the company published in such responsible journals as the *Indian Finance* and *The Eastern Economist*. A prospectus is an authentic source and is semi-official.

"In offering the explanation you have done, you have yourself assumed the responsibility as you state: 'The Provincial Government could have informed the Government of India that in view of the change of the Government in the province the spindlage allotted to the province might be cancelled.' But this was not done. What counter moves would have followed this action on your part is not to the point. Because someone else would do the wrong thing, it is no excuse for us to forestall it and do it ourselves.

"The Statement of Policy of the Orissa Assembly Congress Party quoted by you only pays lip sympathy to *Khadi* and discloses no living faith in it. Self-sufficiency in *Khadi* does not call for an all India Textile Policy especially in a province like Orissa where the vested interests are not so strong. The unit for self-sufficiency in cloth is the home or at the most the village. Such being the case, it does not call for a nation-wide unit to launch on a *Khadi* programme. Hence I am afraid I cannot agree that "the policy with regard to the production of cloth cannot be determined on a provincial basis." If you agree to the principle enunciated in the first paragraph of my article, as you say you do, the simple corollary to it would be a programme of self-sufficiency in *Khadi*. That is the surest and the quickest way of meeting the cloth shortage.

"This is more true of Orissa than other provinces because of the extreme poverty and unemployment prevalent there. The purpose of any economic programme is three-fold. It does not merely meet the material need but provides gainful occupation and at the same time opportunities for the development of personality. The mill industry merely provides the material which is the least important of the three functions. When people buy such goods they part with their other production in exchange. But when they produce their own cloth there is no exchange demanding their other produce which latter, therefore, is not depleted. It is for this reason I hold that the mill industry cannot serve any purpose other than the exploitation of the people of Orissa."

This correspondence only underlines the need for a co-ordinated policy of the Congress as a whole. It was to meet such a situation that the Allahabad Conference laid down some suggestions.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

QUESTION BOX

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Q. What is the difference between your Non-cooperation and the Non-fraternization of the Allies?

A. The answer is obvious. My non-cooperation was purely non-violent in conception as also in effect. This does not mean that practice was always perfect. Theory and practice hardly ever coincide even as Euclid's line in practice never coincides with his theoretical definition.

The non-fraternization policy of the Allies led to disastrous results which he who runs may see, and the pity of it is that the disaster is not yet completed. No one knows where it will lead to.

The 'Nai Talim'

Shri E. W. Aryanayakam, Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, writes:

Nai Talim, the monthly magazine of the Sangh resumes publication from March 1, 1947. The annual subscription has been fixed as Rs. 4 (four). Subscribers may kindly remit the amount by money order to the Manager, *Nai Talim*, Sevagram, Wardha C. P.

MEASUREMENT OF HEALTH

Health is the most precious possession of an individual. Woe be to the nation that lets its individuals neglect their health! With the dawn of freedom in India, it has become our paramount duty to see that the country and its people are steadily advancing to A1 standards from the existing low level.

The last war has proved beyond doubt the root causes of the problems of health in India. They arise mainly from poverty and malnutrition; while dirt and squalor arising out of insanitary conditions lead to epidemics and infectious diseases with attendant high mortality and morbidity. On the other hand ignorance and indifference accelerate each one of these difficulties. The recruits who would have been ordinarily rejected on account of poor physique, after a few weeks stay in fair though not ideal conditions in military camps and after proper feeding, have come upto the normal standards. The achievements of the Indian soldier in the last war, in matter of physical endurance, military discipline and general efficiency have removed the superstitions about military castes and have established beyond doubt that the physique of the Indian is capable of giving results which are in no way inferior to the performance of Western soldiers who had the advantage of generations of previous training and experience. To obtain similar results for the ordinary civilian population there should be no difficulties except the lack of effort and finance.

The average span of human life in India is 23 years against 61 in England; the infant mortality is as high as 267 per 1,000 in some areas while in England it is only 60 and in New Zealand only 30 per 1,000. The average height, weight and chest measurements in India are much lower than those in other countries and though we may not aspire to breed a race of giants, we must take a periodical review of the average measurements which our people are able to attain. For this purpose standard biometric surveys should be started throughout the country. These biometric surveys should be initiated on a uniform basis under the auspices of a Central Biometric Institute laying down uniform standards of measurements in a number of categories e. g. height, weight, chest expansion, blood pressure, lung capacity, haemoglobin percentage, white blood corpuscles, red blood corpuscles, intake of proteids, carbohydrates, fats, and vitamins. These measurements will require some laboratory equipment and can be possible only in large cities. Physical fitness depends also upon emotional balance and it is possible to measure this by a record of various phases of discipline, co-operation, altruism, inhibition and persistence. The perfectly healthy person ought not only be physically fit and alert to protect himself and his family, to be effecient in his work, but to be of highest service to the society in which he lives. Such Biometrical laboratories should be provided in each of the provincial cities and also in the larger district towns.

The villages and smaller towns may be expected to prepare biometric data on the basis of their limited resources and watch whether the physique of the locality is showing the correct upward tend. For this purpose the village school master need be supplied only with a measuring tape, the common village weighing scale being utilized to determine the weight. With the measurements of height, weight and chest expansion, sufficient data can be obtained to arouse the health consciousness among the villagers. Village competitions, taluka competitions and district competitions of feats of physical valour organized under physical education associations, athletic associations etc., would provide useful materials for such statistical compilation.

The help of health centres for families suggested for the cities may be extended to rural areas. The city centres are intended to take up the family as a unit and would cover the functions of medical examination of children at schools, of maternity and child welfare centres, and of helping the average wage-earner and the housewife in their health problems. The city health centres may send out a travelling staff to individual villages for making health surveys and collecting reliable health data. Such Health Clinics or Centres working in association with the Government and Municipal Departments and under the guidance of Central and Provincial non-official Biometric Institutes will provide reliable records of measurement of health. From these records it will be possible to compare Indian standards and averages with those for other countries and to suggest, if necessary, new standards for various regions and for the country as a whole. A Health Centre with the above ideals has been established by the Gujarat Research Society at Parekh House, New Queen's Road, Bombay, where medical examination and advice is given at present, without cost, to families undergoing complete health survey, including laboratory diagnosis and check of diet. It is hoped such voluntary efforts will be started in other parts of the motherland.

Bombay, 27-1-'47 P. G. SHAH

ECONOMY OF PERMANENCE

(A Quest for a Social Order based on Non-violence)

By *J. C. Kumarappa*

With a Foreword by Gandhiji

Price Rupees Two, Postage etc. Annas Five

ECONOMICS OF KHADDAR

(Second Revised Edition)

By *Richard B. Gregg*

Price Rupees Two, Postage etc. Annas Six

Available at:

Navajivan Karyalaya, — P. B. 105, Kalupur, Ahmedabad; — 130 Princess Street, Bombay 2; — 299 Sadashiv Peth, Poona 2; — Kanpith Bazar, Surat; — Lakhajiraj Road, Rajkot; — 641/11 Kucha Mahajani, Chandni Chowk, Delhi; — Bright View Building, Royal Park, Mc Leod Road, Lahore.

GANDHIJI'S WALKING TOUR DIARY

(Continued from p. 63)

he overcomes all things. Every good act is charity. Your smiling in your brother's face, your putting a wanderer in the right road, your giving water to the thirsty is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he has done to his fellow men. When he dies people will ask, what property he has left behind him? But the Angels will ask, what good deeds has he sent before him?

Gandhiji then dealt with the following questions.

Q. Why should there be an insistence on temple-entry? Of course, we understand that in case of objection, there is scope in it for *satyagraha*. No-caste dinners have a limited value; for those who join do not shed untouchability in their homes or during social ceremonies. They look upon these dinners, organized by Congressmen or other progressives, as special occasions when caste rules are held in suspense; something comparable to what one does when one goes to Jagannath Puri and partakes of cooked rice offered to Jagannath without reference to one's caste. Anti-untouchability has not yet gone deep enough to affect the normal social life of individuals. What can be done to break down barriers in private homes? Even with regard to temple-entry there is one question. Do you think that priests in public service in free India will be drafted from among competent men and women without any reference to their former castes?

A. Gandhiji said that it was an apt question in this part of Bengal where there were the largest number of *namasudras*. He welcomed the question doubly because he had occupied the lowest rung of the Hindu ladder and because he did not believe in the ladder of castes. He invited all to occupy that lowest rung. Then there would be no occasions for such questions as were addressed to him. Meanwhile, he was bound to deal with them. He entirely endorsed the proposition that untouchability would be doomed and totally abolished when there was no prohibition applied against anyone by reason of his caste. The only universal prohibition would be against insanitation, degradation etc. But he clung to the belief that temple-entry took the first place in the programme of removal of untouchability and he made bold to say that social public dinners would precede as they were preceding the final conquest over the demon of untouchability. He prophesied that Hinduism would be destroyed if untouchability was not destroyed even as the British race would lose its name if its British rule was not destroyed in toto as it was certainly being dissolved before their very eyes.

Q. You wrote about economic equality in 1941. Do you hold that all persons who perform useful and necessary service in society, whether farmer or *bhangi*, engineer or accountant, doctor or teacher, have a moral right only to equal wages with the rest? Of course, it is understood, educational or other expenses shall be a charge of the State. Our question is, should not all persons get the same wages for their personal needs? Do you not think that if we work for this equality, it will cut sooner under the root of untouchability than any other process?

A. As to this Gandhiji had no doubt that if India was to live an exemplary life of independence which would be the envy of the world, all the *bhangis*, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day's work. Indian society may never reach the goal but it was the duty of every Indian to set his sail towards that goal and no other if India was to be a happy land.

23-2-'47

Gandhiji had the following two questions addressed to him to which he gave written replies, this being the commencement of his weekly silence.

Q. *Namasudra* girls are usually married at the age of 12 or 13; formerly the usual age was 8 or 9. The bridegroom has to pay a dowry of Rs. 150 for the bride. The average difference between the two is about 12 to 15 years. As a result of this the number of widows in the *namasudra* society is rather large. Among one section of the caste widow-marriage was prevalent. But in imitation of another section which was looked upon as superior, the former are giving up that practice. What is your advice regarding child marriage and widow remarriage?

A. Dealing with the question Gandhiji said that his opinion was definite. In the first instance there should be no possibility of child widows. He was averse to child marriages. It was an evil custom which unfortunately the *namasudras* had perhaps taken from the so-called higher castes.

Gandhiji was also against the system of dowry. It was nothing but the sale of girls. That there should be castes even amongst *namasudras* was deplorable and he would strongly advise them to abolish all caste-distinctions amongst themselves. And in this they should bear in mind the opinion the speaker had often expressed that all caste-distinctions should be abolished, and there should be only one caste, namely, *bhangis* and all Hindus should take pride in being called *bhangis* and nothing else. This applied to the *namasudras* as well.

When child marriages were abolished, naturally there would be few, if any, young widows. As a general rule he was for one man one wife for life, and one woman one husband for life. Custom had familiarized women in the so-called higher castes with enforced widow-hood. Contrary was the rule with men. He called it a disgrace, but whilst society was in that pitiable condition, he advocated widow re-marriage for all young widows. He believed in equality of the sexes and, therefore, he could only think of the same rights for women as men.

Q. You say that you are in favour of inter-religious marriages but at the same time you say that each party should retain his or her own religion and, therefore, you said, you tolerated even civil marriages. Are there any instances of parties belonging to different religions keeping up their own

religions to the end of their lives; and is not the institution of civil marriage a negation of religion and does it not tend towards laxity of religion?

A. Gandhiji said that the questions were appropriate. He had no instances in mind where the parties had clung to their respective faiths upto death because these friends whom he knew had not yet died. He had, however, under his observation men and women professing different religions and each clinging to his or her own faith without abatement. But he would go so far as to say that they need not wait for the discovery of past instances. They should create new ones so that timid ones may shed their timidity.

As to civil marriages he did not believe in them but he welcomed the institution of civil marriage as a much needed reform for the sake of reform.

24-2-'47

This being the last stage of the second part of his pilgrimage, Gandhiji thanked God for the happy ending of the second part. He referred to the intense wish that Bapa, whom he described as the chief priest and servant of the Harijans, had expressed that he should include Haim Char in his programme. He referred also to the origin of the distribution of workers in the villages that had suffered and how Bapa had instinctively selected the Haim Char area as the field of his service.

He then referred to the communications, telegraphic and otherwise, he had received for his opinion on Mr. Atlee's statement. He said there were the Congress and the League, not to mention other associations, which would express authoritative opinions. He would however permit himself to say that the statement had put the burden on the various parties of doing what they thought best. It had declared that British rule would end before or during the month of June 1948. It was up to the parties to make or mar the situation. Nothing on earth could overturn their united wish. And so far as he was concerned, he was emphatically of opinion that if the Hindus and Muslims closed their ranks and came together without external pressure, they would not only better their political condition but they would affect the whole of India and probably the world.

It was an easy descent to what was uppermost in the mind of his audience composed mostly of *namasudras*. He warned them against considering themselves as fallen or untouchables. Those so-called higher castes were the guilty ones; they were responsible for what they had become. If they realized the fact, they would never make the mistake of imitating the evil customs and habits of the higher classes.

He was sorry to hear that there were child marriages amongst them and that child widows were compelled in imitation of the higher castes to abstain from remarrying. The result, he had learned, was that diseases which resulted from promiscuity were prevalent among them. Their betterment would not come from the legislatures or from any other outside agency. It depended on their own efforts. They should remember what the late Malaviyaji used to say that children of God should confine themselves to earning an honest *cowrie* and eat what it could procure. Then there would be happiness for them and untouchability would be a thing of the past. The higher castes so-called would be ashamed of their sin against them.

Bapa pointed out the destruction that was wrought. He was sorry for it but he would not shed a tear for it nor harbour illwill against the destroyers. Let them not bewail their lot. They were used to hard labour or should be. They might plead with the Government to do justice and that in time. But they would not give in if that assistance did not come. They must trust their hands and feet to set them up again in life. God always helped those who helped themselves. Their reliance must be on the living God and on the ever toiling masses.

Provincial Governments and Hindustani

Resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Wardha.

"The Working Committee of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha requests all the Provincial Governments to pay more attention to the spread of the National language, Hindustani. It is evident that the propagation of Hindustani is very necessary for inter-provincial intercourse. In a free India the work of the railways, posts and telegraphs, banks etc. will have to be conducted mostly in Hindustani. Therefore, this Committee appeals to the Provincial Governments to make the study of Hindustani, in both Nagri and Urdu scripts, compulsory as early as possible, of course keeping in view the response of public opinion. For the present the following policy should be adopted:-

(i) It should be compulsory for all schools to appoint Hindustani teachers knowing both the scripts. Whether the two scripts should be learnt, simultaneously or one after the other, should be left to the discretion of the province.

(ii) The Government should give certificates only to those students who have learnt both the scripts.

(iii) Divisions, scholarships and prizes should be awarded only to those students who have studied both the scripts. It should be compulsory for the students of Training Schools and Colleges and other Government servants to have a knowledge of Hindustani in both the scripts.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
GANDHIJI'S WALKING TOUR DAIRY		61
ORISSA'S TEXTILE POLICY	... J. C. KUMARAPPA	64
QUESTION BOX	... M. K. GANDHI	65
MEASUREMENT OF HEALTH	... P. G. SHAH	66
ENGLISH INTO HINDUSTANI—INSTALMENT—XV		69
NOTES:		
THE 'NAI TALIM'		65
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND HINDUSTANI		68

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Kalupur, Ahmedabad
Subscription Rates — INLAND: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; FOREIGN: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 sh. or $. 3.